

Measures of God representations: Theoretical framework and critical review.

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Psychology of Religion and Spirituality, Vol 13(3), Aug 2021, 340-357

Abstract

Over the past several decades, scholarly interest in God representations has grown steadily, but conceptual and measurement challenges have persisted. Consequently, in this article, we build upon a dual-process conceptualization of God representations, which is organized along 2 dimensions: (a) doctrinal representations (i.e., affect-light, "head knowledge") versus experiential representations (i.e., affect-laden, "heart knowledge"), and (b) explicit (i.e., conscious) versus implicit (i.e., nonconscious) representations. We use this conceptualization to critically review 73 existing measures of God representations, which are grouped into 4 categories: (a) self-report measures (n = 55; e.g., God description measures, relationally focused measures, and functionally focused measures), (b) performance-based measures (n = 7; e.g., stimulus-attribution measures and constructive measures), (c) structured interview measures (n = 4), and (d) implicit measures (n = 7). We discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each type of measure and make recommendations regarding their use by researchers and practitioners. Finally, we make several suggestions for improving measurement in this field. (PsycInfo Database Record (c) 2021 APA, all rights reserved)